

THE HONORABLE RICHARD A. JONES

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

BLACK LIVES MATTER SEATTLE-
KING COUNTY, ABIE EKENEZAR,
SHARON SAKAMOTO, MURACO
KYASHNA-TOCHA, ALEXANDER
WOLDEAB, NATHALIE GRAHAM,
AND ALEXANDRA CHEN,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF SEATTLE,

Defendant.

No. 2:20-cv-00887-RAJ

DECLARATION OF ATHENA ADDAMS
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION
TO SHOW CAUSE

I, Athena Addams, declare and state as follows:

1. The information contained in this declaration is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and I am of majority age and competent to testify about the matters set forth herein.

2. I have been a resident of Seattle since 2016. I am a technical program manager by trade.

3. On July 25, 2020, I joined a protest march against police brutality which began in Capitol Hill. We were protesting in solidarity with demonstrations in Portland, Oregon that resulted in a crackdown by federal agents. We began our march between 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., and things continued peacefully until we returned to Capitol Hill at approximately 4:30

1 p.m. At that point, as we passed the East Precinct, the police descended upon the crowd. It
2 seemed to me that they had been staging somewhere nearby and were waiting until we
3 approached the precinct to make their presence visible.

4 4. The police formed a line and pushed our crowd of demonstrators back down Pine,
5 past Cal Anderson Park. Due to our experiences in June, protesters with umbrellas, goggles, and
6 other protective gear knew to move to the front of the group to shield other, more vulnerable
7 individuals behind them. I had an umbrella, so I moved forward.

8 5. When I reached the front of the crowd, I witnessed law enforcement grabbing
9 protesters' umbrellas aggressively, ripping them out of their hands with enough force to—in one
10 instance—rip the umbrella in half.

11 6. The umbrellas are not weapons, and are purely defensive. They are meant to
12 block the gas and projectiles that the police have been using against protesters. In that sense,
13 they are like the masks we wear.

14 7. Without any warning, an officer seized my umbrella and tore at it, destroying it,
15 and leaving me vulnerable against their chemical agents.

16 8. This made no sense to me. We were protesting, but we were not aggressive or
17 violent. It was a sudden conflict provoked by the police for no reason.

18 9. Simultaneously, law enforcement began shooting cannisters full of some kind of
19 chemical agent into the crowd, where they began emitting gas. These cannisters are shot with
20 extreme force and at a close range. One of the cannisters struck me in the leg, causing serious
21 pain and leaving a significant bruise. True and correct copies of two photos I took of this injury
22 the following day are attached as **Exhibits A-B**.

23 10. The chemical agent wafted into the air and began burning my eyes. Thankfully, I
24 was wearing an N95 mask as a COVID-19 precaution, so I didn't suffer respiratory irritation,
25 although others around me did.
26

1 11. The abruptness and severity of law enforcement's assault against us was shocking
2 to me. I heard no warning, and I saw no indication that protesters were being antagonistic or
3 threatening; **we were just marching**. That said, I would have been even more appalled at this
4 attack earlier in the summer, but I have come to expect unprovoked aggression from the Seattle
5 Police Department—so, although deeply startling and upsetting, my experience was not
6 altogether unexpected. I now expect the police to attack protesters, which is a sad commentary
7 on the state of affairs.

8 12. With my eyes stinging, my umbrella crumpled, and my leg throbbing in
9 increasing pain from my injury, I decided that it was no longer safe for me to stay and that I
10 needed to get home to my children. I managed to limp out of the crowd and started to head back
11 to my car. The crowd followed behind me at a distance as the police continued to force them to
12 retreat. Along the way, I passed others heading towards the protest. I warned them that they
13 needed to turn back if they were not prepared to be doused in pepper spray, shot with projectiles,
14 and struck with flash grenades.

15 13. As I continued back towards my car, I passed the restaurant Rancho Bravo. The
16 situation behind me seemed to be escalating. The protesters were screaming, and the explosions
17 were getting louder. This increased my urgency to leave the area, and I hurried back to my car.

18 14. Altogether, I estimate that I left the protest only about ten or fifteen minutes after
19 law enforcement began its assault on the crowd by Cal Anderson. The aggression with which we
20 were forced back with chemical gasses and sprays, struck with projectiles, and physically pushed
21 to retreat was so intense that I was injured almost instantly. It was not an environment where I
22 could continue protesting without further risking my safety.

23 15. I continue to experience pain and severe bruising from my injury.
24
25
26

1 Executed this 26th day of July 2020 at Seattle, Washington.

2 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States and the State of
3 Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

4
5 By: Athena Addams

6 ATHENA ADDAMS
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

EXHIBIT



EXHIBIT B

